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| APPLICATION NO.   | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR    | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO.        |
|---|-------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 10/529,102  | 03/24/2005  | Oriol D. De Balle Comas | 0810.001.0002       | 1961                    |
| 43446   | 7590        | 05/21/2008              | EXAMINER            |                         |
| CASTELLANO PLLC<br>P.O. Box 1555<br>Great Falls, VA 22066 |             |                         |                     | HYLTON, ROBIN ANNENETTE |
| ART UNIT  |             | PAPER NUMBER            |                     |                         |
|   |             | 3781                    |                     |                         |
|   |             | MAIL DATE               |                     | DELIVERY MODE           |
|   |             | 05/21/2008              |                     | PAPER                   |

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

|                              |                        |                          |
|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Office Action Summary</b> | <b>Application No.</b> | <b>Applicant(s)</b>      |
|                              | 10/529,102             | DE BALLE COMAS, ORIOL D. |
|                              | <b>Examiner</b>        | <b>Art Unit</b>          |
|                              | ROBIN HYLTON           | 3781                     |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

#### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 07 February 2008.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**.                    2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-4 is/are pending in the application.
  - 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-4 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
  - a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:
    1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
    2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
    3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)                     | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)           |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .                                    |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)          | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ .  | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ .                        |

**DETAILED ACTION*****Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

1. Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ide (JP 2000-264357) in view of Pruckler (US 6,253,951).

Ide (JP 2000-264357) discloses a protective cover of easily deformable material having a plurality of curvilinear cuts **5'** concentric with the cover body (fig. 5), said curvilinear cuts allowing the cover to be bent for engaging the upper edge of a container rim. The document is silent regarding radial notches, the notches arranged such that the radial cuts are between the radial notches.

Pruckler teaches it is known to provide a protective cover with notches or slits on a peripheral edge to make folding the cover over the rim of a container easier.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the teaching of radial notches to the protective cover of Ide (JP 2000-264357) and to space the radial notches such that the curvilinear cuts are therebetween since applying a known technique to a known device ready for improvement would lead to predictable results. Doing so allows for easier molding of the protective cover to an associated container rim without the risk of tearing the protective cover in the process.

***Response to Arguments***

2. Applicant's arguments filed February 7, 2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to applicant's argument that Ide and Pruckler are nonanalogous art, it has been held that a prior art reference must either be in the field of applicant's endeavor or, if not, then be reasonably pertinent to the particular problem with which the applicant was concerned, in order to be relied upon as a basis for rejection of the claimed invention. See *In re Oetiker*,

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977 F.2d 1443, 24 USPQ2d 1443 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, the devices are both used to cover either partially or in total an upper surface of a container. Thus, they **are** analogous art.

In response to applicant's argument that there is no suggestion to combine the references, the examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, the motivation to combine the references is found in the knowledge of one of ordinary skill in the art. The radially extending notches **5** of Pruckler are for allowing folding of the cover over a container opening for engaging the outer surface of a rim of an associated container without tearing of the cover. To provide this teaching to the cover of Ide would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art for the same reasons as taught by Pruckler.

Applicant further argues neither reference specifically discloses a plurality of curvilinear cuts between radially extending cuts. The examiner agrees. Thus, neither was applied in an anticipatory rejection under 35 USC 102. However, it has been set forth hereinabove that spacing the curvilinear cuts and radial notches in a manner set forth in the instant claims would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.

In response to applicant's argument that the claimed pattern of curvilinear cuts and radial notches would eliminate the need for a "sticking material or thermal bonding", the fact that applicant has recognized another advantage which would flow naturally from following the suggestion of the prior art cannot be the basis for patentability when the differences would otherwise be obvious. See *Ex parte Obiaya*, 227 USPQ 58, 60 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1985). It

is submitted that the combination would eliminate the need for sticking material or thermal bonding as suggested by applicant.

***Conclusion***

3. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

4. Applicant is duly reminded that a complete response must satisfy the requirements of 37 C.F.R. 1.111, including: "The reply must present arguments pointing out the specific distinctions believed to render the claims, including any newly presented claims, patentable over any applied references. A general allegation that the claims "define a patentable invention" without specifically pointing out how the language of the claims patentably distinguishes them from the references does not comply with the requirements of this section. Moreover, "The prompt development of a clear issue requires that the replies of the applicant meet the objections to and rejections of the claims." Applicant should also specifically point out the support for any amendments made to the disclosure. See MPEP 2163.06 II(A), MPEP 2163.06 and MPEP 714.02. The "disclosure" includes the claims, the specification and the drawings.

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5. In order to reduce pendency and avoid potential delays, Group 3720/80 is encouraging FAXing of responses to Office Actions directly into the Group at (571) 273-8300. This practice may be used for filing papers not requiring a fee. It may also be used for filing papers which require a fee by applicants who authorize charges to a PTO deposit account. Please identify the examiner and art unit at the top of your cover sheet. Papers submitted via FAX into Group 3720 will be promptly forwarded to the examiner.

6. It is called to applicant's attention that if a communication is faxed before the reply time has expired, applicant may submit the reply with a "Certificate of Facsimile" which merely asserts that the reply is being faxed on a given date. So faxed, before the period for reply has expired, the reply may be considered timely. A suggested format for a certificate follows:

I hereby certify that this correspondence for Application Serial No. \_\_\_\_\_ is being facsimiled to The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office via fax number 571-273-8300 on the date shown below:

Typed or printed name of person signing this certificate  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Robin Hylton whose telephone number is (571) 272-4540. The examiner can normally be reached Monday - Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Eastern time).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Anthony Stashick, can be reached on (571) 272-4561.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Other helpful telephone numbers are listed for applicant's benefit:

- Allowed Files & Publication (888) 786-0101
- Assignment Branch (800) 972-6382
- Certificates of Correction (703) 305-8309

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- Fee Questions (571) 272-6400
- Inventor Assistance Center (800) PTO-9199
- Petitions/special Programs (571) 272-3282
- Information Help line 1-800-786-9199
- Internet PTO-Home Page <http://www.uspto.gov>

/Robin A. Hylton/  
Robin A. Hylton  
Primary Examiner  
GAU 3781